DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 465 CS 217 769

TITLE A Teacher's Guide for "The Merchant of Venice" and "Othello."
INSTITUTION WGBH-TV, Boston, MA.; Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 21p.; Funded by Exxon Mobil Corporation. Produced by WGBH Educational Foundation Educational Programming and Outreach Department.
AVAILABLE FROM Educational Print and Outreach, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134. Tel: 617-492-2777, ext. 3848; e-mail: WGBH_Materials_Request@wgbh.org; Web site: http://www.pbs.org/masterpiece.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Classics (Literature); *Critical Viewing; *Drama; Interdisciplinary Approach; Learning Activities; Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS Film Viewing; *Merchant of Venice; *Othello; Shakespeare (William)

ABSTRACT

William Shakespeare has influenced most, if not all, Western playwrights. His techniques, themes, characters, and plots are contained in much of what is produced today, from television to Broadway. This teacher's guide provides summaries of the plays "The Merchant of Venice" and "Othello," essays, and corresponding student activities. The summaries can be used to introduce students to the plays before they watch the films, as well as for reference after viewing. The essays will help students gain background information and put the plays into context. The first essay, "Adapting Shakespeare," explores the timelessness of Shakespeare's themes, as well as the pros and cons of adapting his works, and the accompanying activities help students compare and contrast the adaptations. The second essay, "On Race and Religion," examines the portrayal of these controversies in the "Merchant of Venice" and "Othello," and the activities invite students to examine these issues further. The final section, "The Filmmaker's Vision," asks students to investigate the cinematic techniques and choices used in making the films. The guide suggests that these two plays offer excellent possibilities for team teaching in literature, history, social studies, and media studies. (NKA) books. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 459 465

ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre

Teacher's Guide for

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

and

Othello

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Latimore

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fully funded by ExxonMobil

CS 217 769

Exxon Mobil Corporation
5959 Las Colinas Boulevard
Irving, Texas 75039-2298

Kenneth P. Cohen
Vice President
Public Affairs

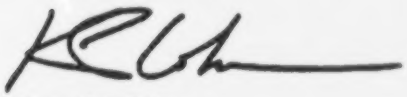
ExxonMobil

Dear Educator,

It is our pleasure to once again provide you with a teacher's guide to accompany ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre. Two of William Shakespeare's notable works, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, are presented in this guide. *The Merchant of Venice*, which premieres on October 8, 2001, on PBS, uses traditional Shakespearean language but is set in pre-World War II Europe. *Othello*, which premieres in Winter 2002 on PBS, is based on the original play but is set in contemporary London.

We are especially pleased that our teachers' guides and accompanying Web site (www.pbs.org/masterpiece) continue to gain popularity with teachers nationwide. I encourage you to use both media to engage your students.

Your feedback on our ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre educational outreach efforts is very important to us, and I appreciate the correspondence we have received. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve our teachers' guides, or would like to share how these materials were beneficial in your classroom, please write to me at ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre, 5959 Las Colinas Boulevard, Irving, Texas 75039. Your efforts to bring classic literature to life for your students are commendable.



Kenneth P. Cohen
Vice President, Public Affairs

CONTENTS

2 Teaching *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*

4 *The Merchant of Venice*: Plot Summary

5 *Othello*: Plot Summary

6 Essay: Adapting Shakespeare

8 Activities and Investigations

10 Essay: On Race and Religion

12 Activities and Investigations

14 The Filmmaker's Vision

15 Resources

16 MASTERPIECE THEATRE Program Listings

The Merchant of Venice
Premieres October 8, 2001, on PBS

Othello
Premieres Winter 2002 on PBS

Off-Air Taping Rights
Educators may tape *The Merchant of Venice* or *Othello* and use it in the classroom for one year after broadcast.

Masterpiece Theatre Online
www.pbs.org/masterpiece
For background information on programs seen on MASTERPIECE THEATRE, biographies, essays and interviews, links, bibliographies, and more, visit MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online at www.pbs.org/masterpiece.

Teaching *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*

TOO OFTEN, STUDENTS ARE LECTURED ON "the greatest playwright of all time" without really being taught what Shakespeare has to offer. And they're expected to understand language they can't initially relate to. Yet Shakespeare's gripping narratives and dazzling linguistics provide topics for exploration not only within the context of Shakespeare's 17th century, but for all worlds and eras, including our own.

Shakespeare has influenced most, if not all, Western—and possibly worldwide—playwrights. His techniques, themes, characters, and plots are contained in much of what is produced today, from television to Broadway. Critic Harold Bloom, in *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, notes, "Shakespeare teaches us how and what to perceive, and he also instructs us what to sense, and then experience as sensation."

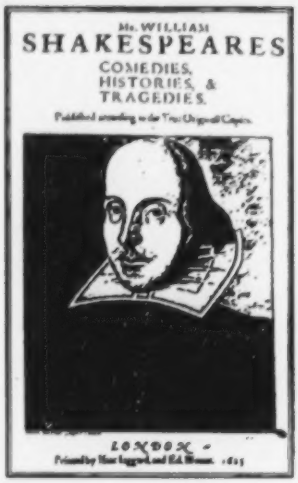
In particular, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* each offer many valuable teaching opportunities. The timelessness of Shakespeare's themes—race, religion, gender, family, marriage, love, and betrayal—makes these plays as meaningful today as in the era when they were written. Besides studying the plays themselves, students can learn to think and talk about the profound issues raised by Shakespeare.

Both plays discussed in this guide deal with controversial subjects. *The Merchant of Venice* explores anti-Semitism, familial strife, and possible homosexuality. *Othello* involves sexual jealousy, racial tensions, spousal abuse, betrayal, and murder—enough dramatic tension to keep anybody in his or her seat. These charged themes present considerable opportunities for studying historical context, as well as the relevance of the plays (and the themes) to the 21st century. As students learn to interpret for themselves what Shakespeare presents and the techniques he uses they will also be learning how such drama reflects history—and their own lives as well.

Teaching Strategies

The Merchant of Venice and *Othello* offer excellent possibilities for team-teaching in literature, history, social studies, and media studies. English classes can explore Shakespeare's elegant literary techniques. Students will gain the background necessary for comparing and contrasting Shakespeare's language and structure with myriad adaptations and other literary works. By learning about the historical context of Shakespeare's plays and applying his themes and

A scene from *The Merchant of Venice*. Shylock struggles when faced with recovering "a pound of flesh" from Antonio.



Title page of the First Folio

scenarios to other eras, students in history and social studies classes will broaden and deepen their understanding of historical issues and events. Media studies students can examine how Shakespeare has influenced many kinds of artistic expression, as well as what the implications are when his works are adapted for various media.

How to Use This Guide

This guide provides summaries of each play, essays, and corresponding student activities. The summaries can be used to introduce students to the plays before they watch the films, as well as for reference after viewing. The essays will help students gain background information and put the plays into context. You may want to photocopy and distribute the essays to students for classroom discussion. (You can also download the essays, additional student activities, as well as this teacher's guide from MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online at www.pbs.org/masterpiece.)

The first essay, "Adapting Shakespeare," explores the timelessness of Shakespeare's themes, as well as the pros and cons of adapting his work. The accompanying activities help students compare and contrast the MASTERPIECE THEATRE adaptations. The second essay, "On Race and Religion," examines the portrayal of these controversies in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*. The activities invite students to examine these issues further. "The Filmmaker's Vision" asks students to investigate the cinematic techniques and choices used in making the films.

The Masterpiece Theatre films

The Merchant of Venice, which premieres on PBS on October 8, 2001, at 9:00 PM, is 142 minutes. *Othello*, which premieres on PBS in Winter 2002, is 104 minutes. Check the teacher's guide section of MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online for suggested viewing segments.

Please Note: Both the original plays and the MASTERPIECE THEATRE adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* feature controversial elements. Although *The Merchant of Venice* uses traditional Shakespearean language, it contains possible homosexual themes as well as the character of Shylock, which many audiences, past and present, have objected to as anti-Semitic. *Othello* is a modern adaptation of the original play set in a contemporary London police department. It contains strong language, explosive racial tensions, violence, and frank sexual situations. You should preview both films before using them in class. You may also want to send a letter home to parents explaining the unit before you begin.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Othello

The Merchant of Venice: Plot Summary

Portia and her maid Nerissa

The MASTERPIECE THEATRE production of *The Merchant of Venice*, adapted and directed by Trevor Nunn with Chris Hunt, was originally staged as an award-winning play for England's Royal National Theatre in 1999. The film was produced by Richard Price and Chris Hunt. Although retaining Shakespeare's language, the play has been moved to a setting that evokes pre-World War II Europe. You may want to photocopy and distribute the plot summary of the play before students view the MASTERPIECE THEATRE production.

AS THE PLAY OPENS, WE MEET ANTONIO, a Venetian merchant. Antonio agrees to give his best friend Bassanio the money he needs to travel to Belmont, where Bassanio hopes to woo and marry the clever and beautiful Portia. Antonio has no cash so he goes to Shylock, a Jewish moneylender. Antonio accepts a bargain from Shylock in exchange for the money: Shylock will charge no interest, but if he is not paid back on time, Antonio will forfeit, literally, "a pound of flesh."

In Belmont, Portia meets a series of suitors. Her father's will stipulates that she must marry any man who chooses correctly from among three "caskets" (gold, silver, and lead cases), finding the one containing her portrait. The Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Aragon both fail. Bassanio wisely chooses the lead casket. But just as the couple are united, news arrives that Antonio's ships have been lost at sea; he will not be able to repay Shylock on time. Meanwhile, Shylock, devastated and angry that his daughter Jessica has run off to marry Lorenzo, a Christian friend of Antonio and Bassanio, demands his due: a pound of Antonio's flesh. Portia offers to repay the loan three times over but is refused. Portia and her maid Nerissa devise a plan to help save Antonio and travel to Venice disguised as men.

Shylock's case against Antonio is brought to trial, presided over by the Duke of Venice. The Duke and Bassanio urge Shylock to accept repayment of the loan and release Antonio from the grim penalty. Shylock refuses, demanding justice. A young legal expert, Balthazar (Portia in disguise), arrives with his "clerk" (Nerissa) to help settle the matter. She confirms that Shylock is entitled to "a pound of flesh," but pleads with Shylock to place "mercy" above "justice" and spare Antonio. When he still refuses, Portia reminds Shylock that, according to the law, if he sheds any of Antonio's blood while taking his flesh he will be arrested. Shylock relents and agrees to accept repayment of the loan, but Portia now argues that he should not only be denied his money but that he face a penalty of death for plotting to take the life of a Christian. Sparing Shylock's life, the court takes half his wealth and requires him to convert to Christianity.

Portia, still disguised, demands that Bassanio thank her by giving her his ring, a gift from Portia that he had promised never to remove. Bassanio hands over the ring; his friend Gratiano gives up Nerissa's ring. Back in Belmont, Portia and Nerissa accuse their men of having given their rings to other women. Portia finally reveals the truth. She and Bassanio are reunited just as news arrives that Antonio's ships have been saved.

In the courtroom, Portia confronts Shylock.

Othello: Plot Summary

MASTERPIECE THEATRE's *Othello* is an adaptation of Shakespeare's famous tragedy. The screenwriter, Andrew Davies, set aside traditional Shakespearean language and placed the story in modern-day London. (For more background on the Davies adaptation, visit MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online.) The elements he retained will be quickly recognizable: the major characters; the outline of the plot; specific lines and speeches that recall the original version. You may want to photocopy and distribute this plot summary of the play before viewing the film, so students can compare and contrast the two versions.

IN THE OPENING SCENE, Iago complains that Othello, his Commander, has passed him over to promote handsome Cassio to be his Lieutenant. He vows to get revenge. Iago first asks his friend Roderigo to tell Desdemona's father Brabantio that his daughter has left to marry Othello, a marriage Brabantio opposes because Othello is a Moor (an African). Brabantio confronts Othello, and they take their argument to the Duke, who has summoned Othello to ask him to sail to Cyprus to stop a Turkish invasion. Convinced by Othello and Desdemona that they love each other deeply despite their differences, the Duke gives Desdemona permission to travel with Othello. By the time they reach Cyprus the foreign threat is gone.

Iago has Roderigo get Cassio drunk and draw him into a street fight. Iago has his revenge on Cassio when Othello strips Cassio of his rank for misbehavior. Then Iago decides to make Othello believe his wife is unfaithful. He encourages Cassio to ask Desdemona to plead with Othello to be reinstated. Iago suggests to Othello that Desdemona is Cassio's lover. Trusting Iago and mad with jealousy, Othello promotes Iago and asks Iago to help him kill Cassio and Desdemona.

Iago plants Desdemona's handkerchief in Cassio's room. Cassio gives it to his mistress, Bianca. Othello believes Bianca's possession of the handkerchief is proof that Desdemona and Cassio are lovers. He verbally abuses his wife in front of others, who are shocked at the change in the noble and powerful man.

Iago has manipulated Roderigo into trying to kill Cassio. The attempt goes wrong, and Cassio wounds Roderigo; Iago stabs Cassio in the leg. Othello hears Cassio cry out and thinks Iago has killed him. He returns home, ready to kill Desdemona. Meanwhile, Iago "finds" the wounded Cassio and accuses Bianca of causing Cassio's injury. Iago quietly kills Roderigo and sends Emilia (Iago's wife) to Desdemona with news of what has happened.

Dessie Brabant and John Othello

Othello reaches the sleeping Desdemona first. Othello kisses her, wakes her, and accuses her again. Over her protests that she loves him and is innocent, he smothers her. Emilia enters and Desdemona revives for a moment, declaring herself guiltless but saying, as she dies, that Othello is innocent of her death. Iago and others enter, and Emilia defends Desdemona's innocence, recognizing that Iago is behind the tragedy. Othello sees the truth and tries to kill Iago. Iago kills Emilia and flees; Othello condemns himself and commits suicide. Iago is seized and taken away.

Main Characters

***Othello*, 1604**	***Othello*, 2001**
Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army	John **Othello**, Metropolitan Police Commissioner
Desdemona, a Venetian lady	**Dessie Brabant**, a journalist
Iago, Othello's "ancient" or assistant	**Ben Jago**, Deputy Police Commissioner
Cassio, promoted to Othello's second-in-command	Michael **Cass**, Superintendent assigned to guard Dessie
Brabantio, a Venetian senator, father to Desdemona	James **Brabant**, aristocratic father of Dessie
Emilia, Iago's wife and Desdemona's attendant	**Lulu**, Dessie's best friend
Roderigo, Venetian gentleman, former suitor to Desdemona	Alan **Roderick**, a white officer implicated in the beating death of an unarmed black suspect
Duke of Venice	**Prime Minister of Great Britain**

ESSAY

Adapting Shakespeare

"Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To Whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!"

THUS WROTE PLAYWRIGHT AND POET Ben Jonson in 1623 of his greatest rival, William Shakespeare—words that still hold true for most critics today. The timelessness of Shakespeare's themes continue to keep his plays fresh. He dramatized basic issues: love, marriage, familial relationships, gender roles, race, age, class, humor, illness, deception, betrayal, evil, revenge, murder, and death. He created unforgettable characters, from lowly thieves to lofty kings, who have become archetypes of modern drama, but remain people we can relate to. "The most admirable people can be flawed," director Trevor Nunn notes in an interview (available on MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online), "while the most despicable people can be redeemed by elements that allow us to understand them."

Othello and *The Merchant of Venice* are ideal examples of Shakespeare's classic tales that students can still relate to. Othello, Desdemona, and Iago play out a drama of race, love, passion, deception, and betrayal as relevant today as in the 17th century. Othello's ill treatment by a racist society and his internalized self-doubt continue to resonate in today's turbulent culture, both in fiction and in life (as is evident in MASTERPIECE THEATRE's modern adaptation). Othello's story transcends the color of his skin: it's the concept of the *other* that Shakespeare writes about, the mistrust of differences that is present in all societies. Desdemona's wifely loyalty, and the physical abuse she withstands at the hand of her jealous husband, are issues that make up today's news. And Iago's envy and treachery still echo in competitive scenarios, from high school elections to government coups.

The Merchant of Venice also presents scenarios that are instantly recognizable today. Portia and Jessica must transcend limitations placed by their fathers on their choice of husbands by using their wits. Antonio shows his love for Bassanio by borrowing money to help him win Portia's hand. And Shylock, the Jewish moneylender—and "other"—living amidst rampant anti-Semitism, is vilified and ultimately punished by Christians. Shakespeare presents Shylock harshly, but also allows him to speak eloquently on his own behalf, perhaps the first time a European playwright afforded a Jewish character such a podium. Audiences and critics have puzzled over Shylock for centuries: Is Shakespeare's portrayal anti-Semitic or sympathetic?

From Stage to Television

Shakespeare has been presented in myriad versions, from the traditional to the almost unrecognizable. England's Royal Shakespeare Company has presented both true-to-book Elizabethan-era productions as well as modern versions, including a 1986 *Romeo and Juliet* featuring sports cars, swimming pools, and hypodermic needles. Ben Donenberg's *Starship Shakespeare*, produced in Los Angeles in 1985, offered Shakespearean characters fighting for control of a starship. Staged musical adaptations include Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story* (also made into a movie), with rival street gangs as the warring families of *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as Prokofiev's 1940 ballet. There have also been many operas made from Shakespeare plays.

Shakespeare wrote for the masses, much like television writers. In the early days of TV, Shakespeare plays were seen on many drama series. Perhaps due to his reputation as "intellectual" or "high culture," today Shakespeare plays are seen only occasionally on TV and are now mostly represented by cultural references in sitcoms, cartoons, and science fiction such as *Star Trek*.

At the Movies

Douglas Brode notes in his book, *Shakespeare in the Movies*, "[Shakespeare's plays] aren't plays at all; rather, they are screenplays, written, ironically, three centuries before the birth of cinema." Shakespeare was first adapted to the movie screen in 1899, when *King John* was filmed as a four-minute movie. The first Hamlet on screen was played in 1900 by Sarah Bernhardt (in a gender twist that perhaps Shakespeare himself would have enjoyed). A highly regarded 1920

Hamlet, by German director Svend Gade, presented the title character as a girl raised as a boy, one of the first complete reinterpretations of Shakespeare.

With the advent of sound came a 1929 production of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Stars Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks act up a storm, at one point attacking each other with whips. Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* and Orson Welles' *Othello*, both produced in the 1950s, are considered some of the best and most innovative film adaptations ever made.

Peter Hall's 1968 *A Midsummer Night's Dream* included mini-skirts and Beatle wigs. (Judi Dench, as Titania, wears no costume at all except for green body paint.) Tony Richardson's 1969 *Hamlet* emphasized the generation gap. Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* featured unknown young actors; his earlier *The Taming of the Shrew* starred the famously volatile couple Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. In the 1970s Roman Polanski's penchant for menace and violence was evident in a rough *Macbeth*.

Kenneth Branagh kindled a resurgence of popular interest in Shakespeare in the late 1980s with *Henry V*, which portrayed the battlefield as squalid, gory, and decidedly unglamorous. The 1980s also saw *Ran*, an Asian version of *King Lear*, by highly-regarded Japanese director Akira Kurosawa.

In the 1990s Zeffirelli made Mel Gibson's title character in *Hamlet* the Oedipal hero of a thriller. Branagh, after a lighthearted *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1993, set his version of *Hamlet* in the late 1800s and focused on revenge. Remaining faithful to the original script in its entirety, Branagh's 242-minute film is the longest English-language film ever. At the end of the decade, Ethan Hawke created yet another *Hamlet*, set in modern-day New York. Shakespeare's renewed popularity drew top box office stars such as Michelle Pfeiffer to a 1999 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Baz Luhrmann's raucous *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*, set in modern-day Miami, featured rising teen stars Leonardo diCaprio and Claire Danes.

Shakespeare has also inspired several recent films. Al Pacino explored *Richard III* in his 1996 documentary *Looking for Richard*. In 1998 *Shakespeare in Love*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow, won seven Academy Awards, including best picture. The next year, Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger starred in *10 Things I Hate about You*, a modern teen version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Continuing that trend was *Get Over It* in 2001, based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the upcoming *O*, a teen version of *Othello*.

Traditional or Not?

Directors and actors have adapted Shakespeare as long as his plays have been performed. Some feel that without Shakespeare's original poetry, audiences are robbed of the opportunity to experience the cleverness, poetry, and majesty of the language—Shakespeare's genius. Others feel that modern adaptations don't challenge viewers and offer weaker plots and less complex characters.

Yet adaptations often offer a commentary on the times in which they were produced. Changes in language, setting, and costume help place the production in a particular time or style. The variety of adaptations certainly increases our ability to understand and appreciate Shakespeare. For example, the contemporary language and setting of MASTERPIECE THEATRE's *Othello* is a compelling and relevant statement on racial tensions today; the pre-World War II setting of MASTERPIECE THEATRE'S *The Merchant of Venice* puts the play into a fascinating historical focus. Adaptations continue to allow new audiences to be drawn in by Shakespeare's characters and themes. "The trick is," director Trevor Nunn says in an interview about *The Merchant of Venice*, "to make a completely new piece of work while preserving the original piece of work."

Kenneth Branagh as Henry V

Activities and Investigations

BEFORE SELECTING ONE OR MORE of the following activities, you may want to photocopy and distribute (or download from MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online) the "Adapting Shakespeare" essay for students to read and discuss. For additional activities and extensions, visit the teacher's guide section of MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online.

The Merchant of Venice

1. Comedy or Tragedy?

What is a comedy? What is a tragedy? Ask students to define these terms and think of films or works of literature that they would place in each genre. Next ask students to do some literary research to define "Shakespearean tragedy" and "Shakespearean comedy." Post all four definitions in the classroom.

Now consider a question that has followed the play over the centuries: is *The Merchant of Venice* a comedy? Or is it a tragedy? Can it be both?

Select a role: a character from *The Merchant of Venice*, the film's director, or Shakespeare himself (assign or select roles so that all parts are covered—duplicates are fine). Looking at the question from inside your role, write an answer to the comedy or tragedy question. Cite specific lines or scenes to support your position.

Now take a stand—literally! Tape, draw, or imagine a line stretching across the front of the room. The left end point of the line is "comedy," the right end point is "tragedy." In turn, each student walks up to the line, states his or her role and *takes a position* somewhere along the line while *stating a position* on the question. Successive students stake out a spot to the left (more "tragic") or to the right (more "comic") of students already in place. Students may change their positions along the line at any time if the arguments offered by others persuade them to move further in one direction or another.

Portia and Bassanio

2. Time and Place

Trevor Nunn, director of the MASTERPIECE THEATRE production, has said that he wanted to "present the play with a precise sense of foreboding." Describe the set and the costumes chosen for this production. What kind of a society do they suggest? What mood or tone do they create? Why do you think the director decided to change the setting? What year do you think it is? Where is it? (For more information on the adaptation, including an interview with the director, visit MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online.)

Working with others, propose another setting (time, place, set design, and costumes) for *The Merchant of Venice*. Can a different setting change the message of the work? Play around with the setting, moving it across time or culture, from the city to the country. Share your ideas as a class. Then discuss: how can directors use setting and costumes to emphasize themes and guide the viewers' responses to the characters and action of the play?

3. Up-to-Date

The Merchant of Venice continues to be played today because of its powerful themes and drama. But its plot is antiquated, even offensive to modern viewers. Can this play be modernized, as Andrew Davies did with *Othello* or as screenwriter Karen McCullah Lutz did with *10 Things I Hate about You?* Make an argument for the value of presenting this play to a 21st century audience. What themes, ideas, conflicts, emotions in the play are relevant today? Why are they still important?

As a group or class project, create a plot outline for a new contemporary adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. Who would Portia be in 2001? Bassanio? His friends Solanio and

The modern set of *Othello*, directed by Geoffrey Sax.

Solarino? How would a modern Antonio make his money? Who might Shylock and Jessica be, and how would the other characters respond to them? After you have outlined the new adaptation, write ad copy urging viewers to watch the new version. Try writing, performing, and filming a short scene.

Othello

1. Details, Details, Details

Andrew Davies played freely with the characters and plot of Shakespeare's *Othello* when he wrote his new screenplay. After viewing *Othello*, review this list of plot details from the original play. How has Davies adapted each element? Why do you think he made the changes he did?

- Othello promotes Cassio over Iago.
- Othello is sent to Cyprus to fight Turkish invaders.
- The Turkish fleet founders: Othello has no battle to fight.
- Othello has lived his life in tents—he is not a part of the Venetian social world.
- Iago gets Cassio drunk.
- Desdemona pleads with Othello on Cassio's behalf.
- Iago creates false proof of Desdemona's unfaithfulness.
- Iago kills Roderigo.
- Iago's plot is unmasked; he is taken away to be punished.

2. Othello Today

Shakespeare would probably not be surprised that *Othello* has been adapted; he did the same thing himself when he wrote his play, which was based on a 1565 Italian novella by Giraldi Cinthio. Shakespeare developed characters, themes, and language in his own style for his own purpose (significantly, turning Othello from a villain into a tragic hero.) Review the differences you have noted between the play (see Activity #1, above) and the new adaptation of it:

- What did Davies have to change when he set his screenplay in 2001?
- How do Davies' changes serve to develop the characters in a new way?
- How do his changes restate or reexamine the themes of Shakespeare's play?
- What contemporary questions and issues does Davies' screenplay explore?
- What do you think Shakespeare would think of this new version of *Othello*?
- Write a short note that Shakespeare might send to Davies after seeing his film.

3. Solving the "Problem" of *Othello*

Over the years *Othello* has left critics and viewers of the play wondering and debating: Does Shakespeare provide Iago with enough human motivation for the malevolent acts he commits? Is it plausible that the intelligent, noble Othello could fall so quickly into Iago's trap, turning from blissful newlywed to murderer in three days?

Challenge students to find their own answers to these critical questions. (If students have not read the play, refer them to the summary on page 5 or to a scene-by-scene summary from another source.) Is the play deeply flawed, or is it disturbing and challenging *because* of its "problems"? Do the play's problems provoke you to think deeply about human nature, or would they be better "fixed" by a rewrite?

It can be argued that Andrew Davies takes the role of problem-solver as a screenwriter. Direct students back to his film. How has Davies changed the plot to address the "problems" of *Othello*? Does the screenplay provide satisfactory answers to the two questions above? Why or why not?

ESSAY

On Race and Religion

ALTHOUGH THE PLOTS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS ARE SPECIFIC, the motivations of the characters—as well as of Shakespeare himself—have been the source of much debate. Arguments continue over interpretations of Shakespeare's intentions in part because his plays remain so profoundly relevant.

On Race

Race is a particularly critical factor in *Othello*, the story of the "dark Moor" who succumbs to sexual jealousy amidst a white society. Why does Iago mislead Othello so cruelly? And why does Othello believe Iago's lies, and ultimately commit the heinous act of killing his beloved wife? What does Shakespeare mean to say in this scenario?

Shakespeare doesn't make Iago's intentions clear, nor does he shed light on Othello's personal fears and insecurities. Instead he supplies situation, action, and often vague dialogue. The play opens with soldiers Iago and Roderigo speaking ill of their leader, Othello (unnamed here), who has just eloped with Roderigo's love interest, Desdemona. They refer to him as "thicklips" and "the devil." Iago later describes Othello as an "an old black ram … tupping your white ewe." In Davies' adaptation, there is no doubt that the society surrounding John Othello is racist. Early on, police commissioner Carver makes crude comments about his black officers and, confiding in Jago about promoting black officers, says,"Wouldn't it be nice just to relax and tell the truth for once? They're [blacks] just not up to snuff, not yet."

In the play, Iago notes bitterly that Othello has passed him up for a promotion. And in a later aside, he declares, "I hate the Moor, and it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets he's done my office. I know not if't be true but I, for mere suspicion in that kind, will do as if for surety." In the modern version, he says, "You know I'm eaten up with sodding envy. You do know that, don't you?" Is Iago a racist? A disgruntled employee? A cuckold? Does he lust after Desdemona, or even Othello himself? Or is he simply a psychopath? Shakespeare doesn't say. Even when Othello asks Iago his motives, Iago answers cryptically, "Demand me nothing; what you know, you know; from this time forth I never will speak word."

In the 17th century, racism was an accepted part of public life; people of color were often thought of as "savage." Shakespeare would have encountered no societal pressures against presenting such ideas. Yet he doesn't actually portray Othello as inferior. Although Iago and Roderigo make him sound despicable in their disparaging first-act conversation, Shakespeare then shows Othello as a well-spoken and highly regarded military leader who has won the hand of an aristocratic woman. Iago's treachery is what ultimately tears Othello apart. Does Shakespeare mean to portray Othello as inferior? Or does he show Othello's internalization of the harsh prejudice against him, ultimately believing himself incapable of winning Desdemona's love?

Perhaps Shakespeare was only trying to sell tickets. Shakespeare was brilliant at creating absorbing scenarios that drew in crowds and kept their attention. Racial tension in *Othello* (with a good dose of sexual jealousy) is no small part of the drama that rivets the viewer—in modern as well as Elizabethan times. Norrie Epstein recounts in her book *The Friendly Shakespeare*: "During one production in the Old West, a member of the audience took out his pistol and shot the actor who was playing Iago. On his tombstone were the words 'Here lies the greatest actor.'"

Movie director and actor Orson Welles felt that Iago must be impotent to be so angrily motivated, and directed the character as such. Director Tyrone Guthrie and actor Laurence Olivier went to psychoanalyst Ernest Jones' office to discuss motivations in *Othello*, and heard the Freudian version: Iago was subconsciously in love with Othello rather than jealous of him, and thus had to destroy his marriage. Olivier took this interpretation to heart, and as Iago, delivered a kiss full on the mouth to Ralph Richardson's Othello with the line, "I am your own forever." Avant-garde director and writer Charles Marowitz believed the play to be a significant statement

about race. He saw the character Othello as "a toady and as someone who made a contemptible adjustment to his white masters." At the end of Marowitz's 1972 play, as Othello is to commit suicide, Iago asks him, "Are you going to be a tool of white audiences just to give them a catharsis?"

On Religion

Religion has also been a source of controversy in Shakespeare's plays, specifically in *The Merchant of Venice.* Shylock, the Jewish moneylender, is vilified by a flagrantly anti-Semitic society. He is presented in the most stereotypical of anti-Semitic terms: he has red hair (a 17th-century reference to the devil) and a big nose, dresses in filthy clothes, and is a seemingly greedy loan shark with little compassion for others. When his daughter runs off with a Christian suitor, taking a considerable sum of her father's money with her, the devastated Shylock can't decide which loss is greater—his ducats or his daughter.

But Shakespeare also lets a Jewish character make an impassioned plea for empathy. When maligned by Antonio and his Christian cohorts, Shylock says in his now-famous speech, "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions…If you prick us do we not bleed…?" Bassanio, the Christian courtier, is as fond of money as Shylock is. In Shakespeare's time, audiences expected a Jewish character to be fiendishly cruel. Since Elizabethans believed that conversion amounted to saving one's soul, Shakespeare gives Shylock, in Elizabethan terms, a happy ending.

Arthur Bouchier as Shylock at the Garrick Theatre, 1905

Critics have come to contradictory conclusions about Shakespeare's intentions regarding Shylock. While many see the play as anti-Semitic, some believe the play to be pro-Jewish, citing Shylock's now-famous speech as proof. More confusion is added by the next section of the speech, where Shylock consigns himself to revenge: "…If a Jew wrongs a Christian, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge! The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction." While some see this as attributing an-eye-for-an-eye harshness to the "despicable" Jew, others view it as Shakespeare taking Christianity to task for hypocrisy. Trevor Nunn, director of the MASTERPIECE THEATRE production, comments, "My intention is to show that the play is as much anti-Christian as it is anti-Semitic. It is a masterpice about human behavior in extremis."

Shakespeare does make clear Shylock's provocation for revenge—Antonio and his friends have goaded him publicly—but any political or social statement made by this motivation remains unresolved. Some argue that Shakespeare made Shylock both detestable and sympathetic mainly so he could increase the play's dramatic tension.

The critic Harold Bloom in his book *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* notes, "We can keep finding the meanings of Shakespeare, but never *the* meaning." As each generation re-interprets Shakespeare, it's likely that these issues will continue to challenge, infuriate, and intrigue audiences.

Activities and Investigations

BEFORE SELECTING ONE OR MORE of the following activities, you may want to photocopy and distribute the "On Race and Religion" essay (or download it from MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online). For additional activities and extensions, visit the teacher's guide section of MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online.

1. Playing Against Type

What is a stereotype? How do stereotypes originate? In Shakespeare's world, the stereotype of Jews was viciously negative; similarly, Othello, an African, would have been viewed as inferior. But do Shakespeare's plays encourage or challenge the widespread anti-Semitism and racism of the time?

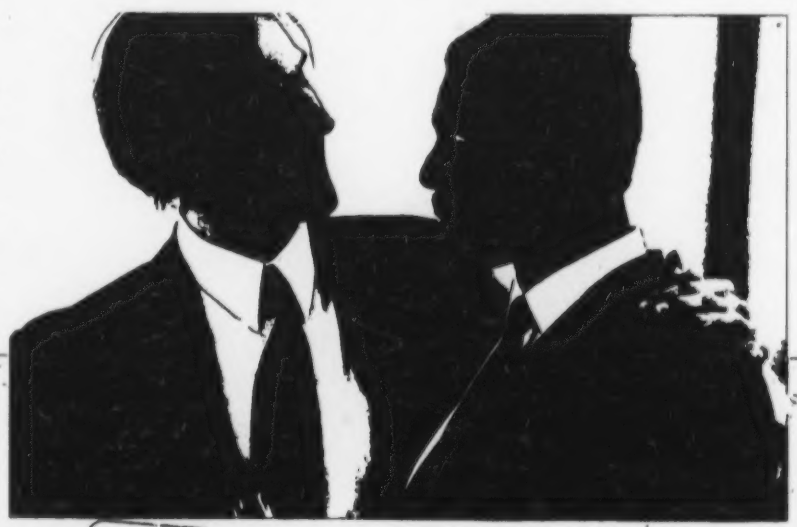
Before answering, consider other examples. Identify characters in television, film, and literature that are built on a stereotype (of age, class, region, ethnicity, race, etc.). List them on the board.

- Which characters are stereotypes that reinforce negative images? Label them.
- Which characters stretch or break out of their stereotypes? How do they do it? What message or lesson about stereotypes do the characters deliver?
- What role do stereotypes play in art? Should they remain in classic works or be a part of newly-created art?
- Read the essay "On Race and Religion." Then think about Shakespeare's Othello and Shylock. Does each character reinforce or challenge the stereotype an Elizabethan viewer would have brought into the theater? If so, how?
- Is the Othello in Andrew Davies' adaptation a stereotype? Why or why not? Do other characters see him as one?
- How do you think a modern viewer's response to stereotypes differs from viewers in Shakespeare's time?
- Do you conclude that Shakespeare was anti-Semitic and/or racist? Why or why not?

2. The Outsider

Draw a set of concentric circles on a piece of paper. The circles represent the society in which *Othello* or *The Merchant of Venice* is set. Place the main characters from the play in position within the concentric circles to show the relationship of each to the mainstream society in the center.

- Compare your diagram with others in your class. Do you see any differences? Discuss your reasoning and try to reach a consensus on where each character should be plotted. Who is an "insider"? Who is an "outsider"? What are the relationships between the characters in the center and at the edges? Try making a similar chart placing characters based on how sympathetic they are and compare. What do you see?
- Where did you position Othello and Shylock? Why do you think Shakespeare placed these characters from the outer circle of society at the center of action in his plays? What is the role of the "outsider" in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*?
- Now think beyond Shakespeare: what can an "outsider" character see that other characters



Iago and Othello

cannot? Look back on your own experience and recall a time when you were the "outsider." Draw a concentric circle diagram, plotting where you and others stood during the time you recall. Write a short personal essay telling about that time.

3. Changing Places

How much do race and religion explain characters' behavior and the action on the screen? Play a "what if?" game to find out. Write the name of each major character on an index card and place them in a stack. Create two more cards: for *Othello*, one labeled "black," one labeled "white"; for *The Merchant of Venice*, "Christian" and "Jewish." Create teams of three or four students. In turn, each team draws one card from the character pile and one of the two category cards. For example, this might yield "Portia" and "Jewish" or "Desdemona/Dessie" and "black"—what if Portia had been Jewish? What if Dessie were black? The team confers and offers a new summary of the play, an act, or a scene under the "what if" scenario. Return and reshuffle the cards after each group draws.

4. Character Interviews

In groups of three, identify a pair of characters from *Othello* and/or *The Merchant of Venice* who have something in common: two women; two "outsiders"; two characters in love; two characters who feel despair, jealousy, or another emotion; two winners; two losers, etc. One student will play each character part and the third will be the interviewer. Together compose a series of questions for the interviewer to pose, designed to explore, compare, and contrast what the two characters have in common. Have the character players answer without a script.

5. Shakespeare in the News

The essay "On Race and Religion" argues that the themes and conflict in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* are still important today. Find evidence for this argument by reading newspaper articles and news Web sites for current events that recall any of the themes, conflicts, or characters from either play. Look for tragic heroes, comic endings, items about jealousy, power, marriage, financial problems, racial and religious tension. Print or clip the news pieces. Then return to the plays or the screenplay and locate a quote to accompany each article. Mount the article and the quote together for display.

6. Old Tales for a New Generation

Why read books written before you were born? Why

do we still read and watch Shakespeare? One simple answer is that there are conflicts, desires, and dilemmas addressed in works of the past that are as much a part of our lives as they were a hundred or a thousand years ago. We continue to read the old stories; we also create new stories that retell the old ones again and again.

Test out this thesis: brainstorm a list of ten works you know well that were created by an earlier generation—myths, folktales, legends, epics, novels, song lyrics. You might start your list with tales you recall from childhood, favorite books, works you read in school last year, or "oldies" music. For each work, identify the central idea, issue, or conflict of the work.

Of the ten works on your list, which ones are about ideas or themes that are relevant to your life and your generation? Circle them. Are there any works within the list that tell similar stories or explore similar themes? Draw a line connecting them. Look for similarities between your list and those of others. What ideas or conflicts come up again and again?

Add another layer to the storytelling tradition: take the bare bones of the plot from one of these works and imagine a more modern version of this tale. Provide a title and plot summary. How do you need to change the story so that it speaks to your generation or comments on your own time?

The Filmmaker's Vision

CREATING A FILM FROM A PLAY is not as simple as turning on a video camera to record a stage performance. Filmmaking is a distinct art form, requiring a series of decisions by the filmmakers that produce a viewing experience different from that of live theater.

What are the building blocks of film? How do filmmakers use their art to shape our responses to plot, character, and themes?

Take apart selected scenes from *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* to explore these questions. View a two- to three-minute clip from each film (from the video or from MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online.) You may wish to use the scenes suggested below.

Director Trevor Nunn on the set with Henry Goodman and Debbie Crotty

Compare what you saw and heard in each clip to how you imagine the same scene would play on the stage of a theater. List as many differences as you can. Now compare scenes from the two films against each other, looking at specific elements of filmmaking:

- *Set/background.* How elaborate or realistic are the sets? Are they interiors, exteriors, or both? Filmed on a sound stage or on location? What is the atmosphere of each scene, and how does the set help create it?
- *Lighting.* How is the scene lit? What is the source and intensity of the light? Does it appear natural or artificial? How does the lighting help create the mood or spirit of the scene?
- *Camera work.* How tight are the shots (close-up, wide angle)? What is the position of the camera relative to the actors (above, below, eye-level)? Is the camera moving or steady? Do you feel close to the action or removed from it?
- *Editing.* How many different shots are in the scene? How rapid are the cuts between shots? What is the effect of the editing?
- *Sound.* Are there sound effects or a sound track? Watch for a moment with your eyes closed. What do you hear in addition to voices?

Drawing Conclusions

After developing their answers, have students visit MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online for more background on the making of the films.

- What do you think *The Merchant of Venice* director Trevor Nunn hopes to do with film that he could not do in live theater? How does his film change the viewer's experience of Shakespeare's play?
- What is Geoffrey Sax, the director of *Othello,* trying to achieve? How does his purpose differ from Trevor Nunn's?
- Which film is more like the last film you saw in a movie theater? Refer to specific techniques and choices in your answer.

The Camera at Work

Othello: Point of View
Opening banquet scene

Watch the scene and note the position of the camera in relation to the actors. How does Jago use the camera? What is the camera's point of view during the speech? How does the camera's point of view control how we understand and interpret events? Is Jago controlling what we see in the story and how we see it?

The Merchant of Venice: Capturing Action and Reaction
Trial scene from Portia's entrance

How does the camera follow the dialogue between Shylock and Portia? Specifically, how do the scene's many close-up shots add to the emotional intensity of the scene? How do the wide shots heighten the effect of the action and movement in the scene?

Stop the film on a wide angle shot. Would this shot work better as a close-up? Describe another shot you would consider if you were the director. Stop the film on a close-up. How would the effect be different if the shot were wider? What choice would you make?

Resources

THERE ARE COUNTLESS BOOKS, articles, and Web sites about Shakespeare and his works. For background on *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*, previous adaptations of Shakespeare's work, and more ideas for discussion and activities in the classroom, try these selected Web and print resources.

Web Sites

MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online
www.pbs.org/masterpiece
Produced by WGBH, MASTERPIECE THEATRE Online provides additional information about the films as well as biographical information on Shakespeare; who's who in the story and in the cast; interviews and essays; this teacher's guide (with additional activities); a viewer's forum; story synopses; a linguistic game; and a "play-to-film" section where you can compare the original play to the screenplay, with a short film clip. The *Merchant of Venice* Web site will launch in September 2001.

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare
tech-two.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html
MIT's Shakespeare's home page, where you can download any of Shakespeare's works in their entirety or scene by scene.

Teaching Shakespeare
www.folger.edu/education/teaching.htm
The Folger Library's site for teachers from the Teaching Shakespeare Institute includes lessons plans, Teacher's Lounge for questions, and an idea exchange. See especially "The Good and the Badde: Are Stereotypes a Perfect Fit?" by Maryann Jessop and Jeannie Goodwin, November 1999.

The Shakespeare Classroom
www.jetlink.net/~massij/shakes/index.shtm/#top
Teaching resources and study questions.

Three Scenes, Three Societies, Three Shylocks
www.shakespearemag.com/spring97/daking.asp
A lesson plan for *The Merchant of Venice*, drawn from the teaching resources archives of *Shakespeare Magazine* (www.shakespearemag.com), offers a research-based exploration of how Shylock might have been interpreted in three different historical periods.

Mr. William Shakespeare and the Internet
shakespeare.palomar.edu/
An annotated guide to Shakespeare resources on the Web including timelines and biographical information.

Surfing with the Bard
www.ulen.com/Shakespeare
Student and teacher guides to the plays, discussions, reviews, links to lesson plans, and online courses.

Books

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Books, 1998. A comprehensive study of Shakespeare's plays by the prominent literary critic. Chapters on *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* address major critical questions.

Brode, Douglas. *Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to Shakespeare in Love*. Oxford University Press, 2000. Analysis of various movie adaptations.

Epstein, Norrie. *The Friendly Shakespeare*. Viking, 1990. A resource for students and teachers, including analysis; interviews with actors, directors, critics; anecdotes; and facts on the history of the plays.

Gross, John. *Shylock: A Legend & Its Legacy*. Simon and Schuster, 1992. A critical analysis of the character Shylock. Includes a history of Shylock, interpretations, and a section called "Citizen of the World" which cites the effect of *The Merchant of Venice* on actual events.

Halio, Jay, ed. *Understanding The Merchant of Venice: A Student Casebook*. Greenwood Press, 2000. Essays, analysis, and primary sources.

O'Brien, Peggy, ed. *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Twelfth Night, Othello*. Washington Square Press, 1995. Essays, teaching techniques, activities, and day-to-day strategies for teaching *Othello*, written by faculty and participants in the Folger Shakespeare Library's Teaching Shakespeare Institute.

ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre Program Listings Fall 2001

All programs air at 9:00 PM on Monday evenings

The American Collection: *The Ponder Heart*

October 15

Daniel Ponder, the richest man in Clay County, Mississippi, lives to give his fortune away—much to the dismay of his family. But when he loses his heart to backwoods flower Bonnie Dee Peacock, romantic intrigue, empty bank accounts, and a bizarre murder trial ensue. This adaptation of Eudora Welty's eccentric comic tale is directed by Martha Coolidge and stars Peter MacNicol, JoBeth Williams, Brent Spiner, and Angela Bettis.

The Cazalets

October 22 to November 19

Elizabeth Jane Howard's family epic in the tradition of *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *The Forsyte Saga* opens on the eve of World War II, as the Cazalet clan assembles at the family estate in Sussex, England. The six-hour drama centers on three brothers and a sister, their spouses, and their children coming of age in an ominously changing world. Hugh Bonneville, Stephen Dillane, and Ursula Howells star.

My Uncle Silas

November 26

Albert Finney plays rascally Uncle Silas in a charming series of sketches set in rural England at the turn of the 20th century. Silas is joined by his 10-year-old nephew Edward for a variety of adventures, including poaching, courting, drinking, fighting, and occasionally working. Based on the book by H.E. Bates.

David Copperfield

December 10 and 17

The Peabody Award-winning mini-series based on Charles Dickens' own difficult journey from boy to man features Daniel Radcliffe—soon to star as Harry Potter—as David, Bob Hoskins as Mr. Micawber, and Maggie Smith as Aunt Betsey.

Coming in Winter/Spring 2002

Othello
Lucky Jim
The American Collection: *A Death in the Family*
The Way We Live Now
Love in a Cold Climate
The Road from Coorain

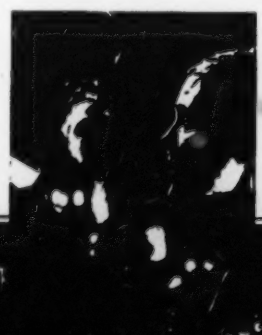
VIDEO CATALOG

The following EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE titles are available on video for educational use. To order, call (800) 949-8670. To see program descriptions, visit the EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE Shop at www.pbs.org/masterpiece. For home videos and American Collection titles, go to the PBS Web site at pbs.org/shop.

Title	Item	Length	Price
All the King's Men*	WG888	2 hrs	$19.95
Anna Karenina	WG1084	4 hrs	$29.95
Bramwell, Series 3*	WG372	4 hrs	$29.95
Breaking the Code*	WG171	90 min	$19.95
Brideshead Revisited*	WG242	10 hrs	$119.95
Broken Glass*	WG160	100 min	$19.95
Cider with Rosie	WG607	2 hrs	$19.95
David Copperfield*	WG890	3 hrs	$29.95
Far from the Madding Crowd*	WG488	4 hrs	$29.95
Frenchman's Creek	WG606	2 hrs	$19.95
Goodnight Mister Tom	WG605	90 min	$19.95
Great Expectations*	WG603	3 hrs	$29.95
King Lear*	WG535	2.5 hrs	$29.95
Lost for Words	WG860	90 min	$19.95
The Mill on the Floss*	WG317	2 hrs	$19.95
Moll Flanders*	WG156	4 hrs	$29.95
Monsignor Renard	WG971	4.5 hrs	$29.95
The Moonstone	WG318	2 hrs	$19.95
Oliver Twist	WG1000	6 hrs	$39.95
Painted Lady*	WG489	4 hrs	$29.95
The Railway Children	WG1001	2 hrs	$19.95
A Rather English Marriage	WG819	2 hrs	$19.95
Rebecca*	WG166	3 hrs	$29.95
Reckless*	WG457	6 hrs	$39.95
Reckless, the Sequel*	WG604	2 hrs	$19.95
A Respectable Trade	WG538	4 hrs	$29.95
Seeing Red	WG891	2 hrs	$19.95
Shooting the Past*	WG822	3 hrs	$29.95
A Town Like Alice*	WG241	5 hrs	$39.95
The Turn of the Screw	WG889	90 min	$19.95
The Unknown Soldier*	WG553	3 hrs	$29.95
The Wingless Bird*	WG463	3 hrs	$29.95
The Woman in White	WG462	2 hrs	$19.95
Wuthering Heights*	WG537	2 hrs	$19.95

* No public performance rights

Anna Karenina



The American

Credits

This teacher's guide was produced by the Educational Programming and Outreach department of the WGBH Educational Foundation.

Director, Educational Print and Outreach
Karen Barss

Manager, Educational Print
Sonja Latimore

Print Project Director
Cyrisse Jaffee

Project Assistant
Corinne Pierce

Designer
Cathleen Damplo Schaad

Print Production
Lenore Lanier
Mark Hoffman

Writers
Carol Cashion
Diana Fischer

Advisors
Robert McBride
Kathleen Schulten

The Merchant of Venice is a Performance Company presentation of the Royal National Theatre production.

Othello is a co-production of LWT and WGBH/Boston in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

ExxonMobil Masterpiece Theatre

EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE is a production of WGBH Boston.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE is a trademark of the WGBH Educational Foundation.

WGBH

EXXONMOBIL MASTERPIECE THEATRE and this teacher's guide are fully funded by Exxon Mobil Corporation.

ExxonMobil

Closed captioned for deaf or hard-of-hearing viewers.

CC

©2001 WGBH Educational Foundation
Permission is granted for reproduction of this printed material for educational use only. All other rights reserved. Other than as discussed above, no part of the *Teacher's Guide for The Merchant of Venice and Othello* may be reproduced, used in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the WGBH Educational Foundation, 125 Western Avenue, Boston, MA 02134.

Printed at Winthrop Printing Company, Boston, Massachusetts

Photo Credits:
Front and back cover (background) Image Farm, Inc ©1998; cover (top) ©The Performance Company/Simon Farrell (bottom) ©Granada TV; inside (background texture) PhotoDisc©2000; pages 1, 2, 4, 8, 12 and 14: ©The Performance Company/Simon Farrell; pages 5, 9: ©Granada TV; page 7: Photofest; page 11 ©Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS; page 3: by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library

WGBH
Educational Print and Outreach
125 Western Avenue
Boston, MA 02134
www.wgbh.org

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No. 51738

ExxonMobil
Masterpiece
Theatre

Fully funded by
ExxonMobil